

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO

DATE DISTR. 22 October 1952

SUBJECT Public Opinions and Attitudes

NO. OF PAGES 3 56-344

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO.

DO NOT CIRCULATE
25X1

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES. WITHIN THE MEANING OF TITLE 18, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, OF THE U. S. CODE, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS TO OR RECEIPT BY AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. THE REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

25X1

1. In any attempt to assess current Polish public opinion it first must be noted that, because of the seven year old Communist regime, not only public opinion but also the class structure of the population has changed. This is caused on one hand by long-enduring, systematic Communist propaganda and on the other hand by the fact that the present government has had a certain amount of success. Therefore, there is rarely anybody in Poland today who is against and thinks badly of everything that is done in the country.
2. Generally, the population thinks that life would be better if "we were not obliged to export such a large amount of goods and products to the USSR and food to the DDR". It must be mentioned that the regime leaves the people very little time to think. Work is very strenuous; it often lasts until the late evening. Average people who frequently have economic problems have no time for abstract musing about ideal conditions.
3. Everyone must admit that the economic success of the regime has been great. The rebuilding of Warsaw, the extensive construction program of Socialism in which Nowa Huta, Leran, the automobile plants in Lublin and Starachowice, and other projects were erected, prove that Poland's economic structure is changing fast and that she is becoming an industrial and agricultural country instead of the purely agricultural state she has previously been.
4. Sudden industrialization and steadily-increasing production, of course, cause a decrease in the quality of manufactured goods. The authorities recently realized this and started to launch a campaign against so-called "faulty products" (brakorobstwo). Officials were moved to take such measures by the protests appearing in all newspapers. These protests originated with Party members, causing them to be taken more seriously by the authorities.

CLASSIFICATION

SECRET

[illegible]

5. The most important problem in Poland today is that of food. Certain articles of food are not available at times. People hoard some articles out of fear that one or the other may not be on the market in the future. Hoarders usually buy from the beginning to the middle of the month, i.e. as long as they have money. It sometimes happens that food which cannot be had in the first half of the month is in abundance in the latter part.
6. The government recently stopped its battle against blackmarket activities. The Finance Investigation Department (Ochrona Skarbowa), which fought hardest against such activities, has been closed. At the counters of the large state-owned department stores, blackmarketeers and profiteers can be seen buying certain articles which they later resell at a higher price to private stores. If the government really intended to combat the blackmarket, it would be able to destroy it in a short time. There must be a reason for the official indifference. Blackmarket activities may provide a convenient excuse to ration additional commodities and articles of food. All rationed items can be bought on the free market at double, triple or even quadruple price.
7. The government also uses the statement that farmers cannot keep up with the nation's industrial development to explain the food difficulties. The reasoning is also used to advertise the collectivization of villages and the establishing of collective farms.
8. Social problems are closely connected with the economic. Food supply difficulties sooner or later force people to give up their noonday meal at home and, instead, to eat in messes at their places of work. Since all adult members of a family usually work and since the children are at school during the day, the family assembles only at night.
9. The life of an average Polish family at present is as follows: husband and wife are employed at different places. Thus their professional life as well as their social activities are different. The children are either in kindergarten or at school. In this way the Communist regime has succeeded in splitting the Polish family, an institution which so far has been the fortress of tradition, religion and national feeling.
10. A remarkable shift in classes has occurred among the population. The pre-war intelligentsia has been replaced by the party aristocracy, the activists, the U.S. (Security Police) and police members. These elements, of course, do not realize how difficult the food situation is, since they are issued special food ration cards (S and U) with which they can buy everything in large quantities in special stores. The pre-war intelligentsia can be divided into two categories; those who are of value to the regime and those who are of no interest. The former still hold certain key positions but gradually are being transferred to unimportant jobs and replaced by adherents of the new regime. The latter are condemned to the life of the impoverished: if employed, they are given the lowest jobs. Many such cases are known; one example is a man who cannot find employment although he is one of the best finance experts in Poland. The reason is that he was a gentleman farmer and a major in the A.K. (Home Army) during the war.
11. A change of opinion on racial discrimination also must be considered. Public feeling in Poland at present is that all people are equal. Propaganda against the alleged persecution of Negroes in America therefore meets with approval.
12. This social change has its advantages and disadvantages. For instance, the workers' recreation and vacation program (wzrazy pracownicze) has proved profitable. It is now easy for a worker to holiday at recreation centers at full or half the actual price or free of charge. The payment depends upon the person's performance of work or relationship to a worker. Distant relatives have to pay more than a worker's wife and children. Full price is not more than 15 zloty a day including room and board. Every worker can afford this. Food served in the recreation centers is ample and good. This social program is very popular, especially among manual workers who are greatly impressed by being able to spend their leave in the best known resorts.
13. The problem of social and health insurance has not been solved satisfactorily. Although special attention has been paid to insurance and although all physicians are compelled to cooperate with the health insurance plan, frictionless functioning of the whole program has not been achieved.

SECRET

- 3 -

A reason for this is the general bad health of the population. Tuberculosis is still prevalent; in addition, physicians fear that there will be a poliomyelitis (Heine Medina) epidemic in 1952. Workers try frequently to obtain a doctor's certificate enabling them to take a few days sick leave. To combat this absenteeism, new orders have been issued according to which every worker leaving his place of work to consult a doctor, is given a special form. The form contains a number of questions including, whether it was really necessary that the bearer left his work. It must be filled out by the physician.

14. All this causes a great deal of work for the physicians who must spend much of their time completing forms. Specialists are especially overburdened. Often patients have to wait hours to have their names entered upon a doctor's waiting list.
15. The attitudes of the population on political problems are difficult to characterize. The population does not believe the Communist press; it thinks that newspaper reports are based on lies. On the other hand Western propaganda is being criticized more and more. The reason for this sentiment is that newscasts from free Western radio stations do not always contain the truth. Early in July 1952 a broadcast of Radio Free Europe was heard in which it was stated that apartments in "Marszalkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa", a recently rebuilt section of Warsaw, had been allotted to Russians. The statement is not true. Any Pole may move into the newly-built apartment houses. He does need a special authorization. The only hindrance is that rents are very high: a two-room apartment with kitchen costs 300 zloty per month, a large sum for an average person.
16. War is very unpopular in Poland. People think that in a future war, Poland will be completely destroyed, the population exterminated not only by the Russians but especially by the American air raids. The population is also convinced that if a future war is won by the western powers, Poland will lose her western territories, a thought which is unbearable to all.
17. The attitude of the population to those who have fled to the west has become very unsympathetic. The most unpopular individual is General Anders. There are no sympathies for the Polish exile government, generally characterized as the "Puppet Government".
18. Underground activity is impossible in Poland at present. The Polish security police is so efficient that detection of an underground movement is only a matter of time. People think that organized resistance is suicide.
19. The security police is dreaded more and more. Fear grips Poland so much that two people do not dare talk openly to each other since both fear that the other may be a police informer. The security police have remarkably exact information on the social and family life of each citizen.
20. People often wonder why the accused at a trial confess to every charge although they were known as men or women of strong will power prior to their arrest. This becomes the more surprising when it is realized that during the Nazi occupation, the Gestapo was not able to make their prisoners talk. Until recently, the population believed that newspaper reports on such trials were incorrect. Now the proceedings are broadcast; any listener is able to convince himself personally by listening to the statements of every accused.
21. A man released from jail recently claims that the security police have a special method to make prisoners talk. Physical coercion is not used, but if a prisoner does not make a statement incriminating himself voluntarily, he is locked up in a solitary cell for from half a year to a year. After that period he is usually so enervated that he will volunteer any statement asked of him.

SECRET